

Kentucky Teacher

APRIL 1999

Kentucky 4th-grade reading scores move up in national rankings

Kentucky 4th-graders made a strong showing on the annual report known as "the nation's report card." Their scores position Kentucky ahead of the national competition in the teaching of reading to 4th-graders.

According to results released March 4 in Washington, D.C., Kentucky 4th-graders made significant gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered in 1998. Samples of 4th-graders in 39 states and 8th-graders in 36 states took the tests, generally considered to be the only tests that give valid results for state-to-state comparisons.

The report of NAEP results contained good news about Kentucky teachers and learners:

- Kentucky is one of only three states to make statistically significant gains in reading from 1992 to 1998 and from 1994 to 1998. (Connecticut and Colorado were the others.)
- Kentucky's reading score for 1998 increased five percentage

points over the 1992 score. The nation as a whole showed no increase in the category, and the southeast region's score dropped one point.

- Kentucky 4th-grade readers started out two points below the national average in 1992, equaled the national average in 1994, and moved three points above it in 1998.

The percentage of 4th-graders reading at the lowest level by national standards decreased five percentage points in Kentucky while declining only one percentage point for the nation. The southeast's score in this category increased by one point.

Because of Kentucky's gains, federal education officials invited Kentucky Education Commissioner Wilmer Cody, a member of the National Assessment Governing Board, to participate in the announcement of NAEP state-by-state results in Washington.

"I am extremely proud of the Kentucky students, teachers, administrators, parents, school council and school board members, legislators,

governors and citizens who have worked so hard for so long — and have encountered so much skepticism — to catapult Kentucky from mediocrity toward excellence," Cody said at the announcement event in Washington. "We're not there yet, but we have the momentum. We're on the way."

Validation

The rising NAEP scores validate improvements in scores on Kentucky's own tests. Scores for 4th-grade reading have shown steady gains on Kentucky Instructional Results Information System tests since 1992. Both national and state test results show the percentage of high-level performers increasing and the percentage of low-level performers decreasing.

Cody said the national showing also validates Kentucky's conviction that all students can learn, no matter what their social, economic or geographic situations.

"Even though Kentucky, in comparison with other states, had a higher percentage of students eligible for free

lunch and a lower percentage of parents with college degrees, our students beat the national average in reading achievement," he said. "Our teachers are demonstrating that they can inspire, lead and teach all students to academic success."

Cody also credited teachers for aligning their instruction with Kentucky's academic core content, developed by teachers two years ago to specify what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level, provide direction for curriculum development at the local level and set parameters for developers of state tests.

Challenges

The demographic data for 4th-grade NAEP results show some important gains but also highlight significant challenges. For example, the reading scores of black students and white students in Kentucky improved by six points from 1994 to 1998, but a 25-point gap between the scores of the two groups remained constant. (The national race gap for 1998 was 32 points.)



For details about national and state-by-state NAEP test results for 1998, visit the Internet at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrelease.shtml>. To view the Kentucky Department of Education's news release on this topic, see www.kde.state.ky.us/coe/ocpg/dpo/99R020.html. If you do not have Internet access and want to request a copy of the news release, phone Lisa York Gross at (502) 564-3421.



Photo by Rick McComb

SOLAR-POWERED READER —
Primary student Steven Hoagland sits on the sun surrounded by the planets as he reads at Southern Elementary School in Fayette County.

More Good News

A sample of Kentucky 8th-graders took the NAEP test for the first time in 1998 and outscored both the nation (by 1 percentage point) and the southeast region (by 4 percentage points) in reading.



Commissioner's Comments

By Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner of Education

Kentucky prepares for CATS 'firsts,' invites citizens to 'Take the Test'

April 19 will be a momentous day: the first day of the first two-week testing window of the first round of testing in the new Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. Expectations are high. Educators, learners and the general public demand a test that validly and reliably measures school and student performance, assesses progress in basic skills as well as analytical thinking skills, and provides results quickly enough to guide improvements in future instruction.

CATS test developers, including hundreds of Kentucky classroom teachers and a host of nationally respected testing experts, focused on building a test that would respond to those demands. They have done a masterful job, keeping the multiple-choice/open-response format focused on the academic core content and assuring that the tests are reliable, valid and developmentally appropriate.

While teachers and students prepare for April 19 and the first CATS

test, some other education partners are gearing up for April 16. On that day, the Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education — with the support and cooperation of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership for Kentucky Schools and The

Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence — will host "Take the Test Day." Parents, local business and civic leaders and other stakeholders will be invited to take part in 90-minute sessions in eight communities (Paducah, Owensboro, Bowling Green, Louisville, Lexington, Covington, Somerset and Pikeville). Those sessions will offer a close-up, hands-on look at CATS, from concept through development, implementation to impact.

The highlight of each session will be a mock testing session. After a pre-

sentation on the "what, how and why" of the new testing and accountability system, we will invite our guests to take and self-score an abbreviated version of the test. This sample test will be similar in format (but not identical in content) to tests their community's

students will be taking during the following two weeks. Each session will close with a question-and-answer opportunity and distribution of information packets partici-

pants can share with others in their neighborhoods, organizations and businesses.

Why "Take the Test Day"? Our objective is to inform the public about the test and how it works. In the process, we will be demonstrating and celebrating what students in Kentucky schools can do. Our goal is, as always, to support students, teachers, schools

and districts. We believe this event, along with other communications efforts, can build an informed public that understands the test and its importance. Understanding is a foundation for support, and public education must have public support to excel.

The event is part of a continuing, statewide effort to keep the public informed and involved in the public education assessment process. I hope you will encourage your community to participate. This can be a unique opportunity for your district or school to boost support for student achievement.

"Take the Test Day" events are scheduled for 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at each of the eight regional sites. To get additional information on the event in your region, phone your Kentucky Department of Education regional service center or your district assessment coordinator.



Kentucky Teacher FORUM

Each month, *Kentucky Teacher* presents a topic and invites teachers' responses. This month's topic:

Block Scheduling

In increasing numbers, America's high schools are moving from the traditional six-, seven- or eight-period day to "blocks" of instructional time lasting from 90 to 220 minutes each. The American Association of School Administrators reports that one in three high schools uses some form of block scheduling, and the concept seems to be gaining momentum.

What do you think about block scheduling?

1. If your school uses some form of block scheduling, what impact — pro or con — has it had on instruction? On learning? On school environment?

2. If your school does not use block scheduling, would you like to try it? Why or why not?

3. If your school does not use block scheduling but would like to, are there specific conditions or situations that stand in the way?

Send your responses to one or more of these questions, plus your name, mailing address, phone number, school and grade level. *Kentucky Teacher* will verify all comments before considering them for publication.

- Send e-mail to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.

- Send U.S. mail to 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

- Send a fax to (502) 564-6470.

Watch future issues of *Kentucky Teacher* for responses.



FORUM RESPONSES

Teachers name favorite Web sites

In the March issue, *Kentucky Teacher* asked teachers: "What one Web site would you recommend as a starting place for teachers — especially those unfamiliar with the Internet?" The responses are rolling in! Apparently, teachers are pleased with what they are finding on the 'Net and are eager to share the wealth with others.

On this page are a few of the many submitted Web site recommendations. These are "get-started" sites that provide links to hundreds of resources designed especially for teachers. As always, begin each address with *http://* when accessing these sites.

- **www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/amazing.html**

"This site has links to more than 700 resources, books, grants, games — everything for educators." The page is compiled by the Children and Technology Committee of the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association.

Drew Cullen

*Director, Ben Johnson-Custer Family
Resource/Youth Services Center
Breckinridge County*

- **www.askjeeves.com** (for teachers)
- **www.ajkids.com** (for students)

"These are search engines that allow you to ask a simple question such as 'Who was Grover Cleveland?' They give you several options for types of sites and also some search results from five other search engines. Lots of feedback from one site!"

Cathy Brandt

*District Technology Resource Teacher
Fayette County Schools
(Several educators recommended the askjeeves site.)*

- **k-12.pisd.edu/Techs/Jim/Jim.html**

"This is the best site I know for a beginning place for teachers. It has projects, activities, data bases and lots

more. The site's manager is Jim Hirsch, executive director of technology for Plano Independent School District in Texas. I attended a workshop of his once and have used all of his information many times."

Rose Adkins

*Teacher and Schoolwide Resource
Hardinsburg Elementary School*

- **www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluewebn/**

"Blue Web'n is the jumping-off point to a 'bazillion' educational sites. I'm always checking it for sites to be used by the teachers with whom I work. This site is amazing! It's my mainstay!"

Phyllis Guthrie

*Teacher and School Technology
Coordinator/Integration Specialist
Nicholas County Schools*

- **www.ed.gov/free/subject.html**

"The U.S. Department of Education accumulated the best educational sites recommended by various federal departments and agencies. They provided this site to give links to this plethora of knowledge. It is hierarchically arranged by disciplines/categories/topics, which makes for easy navigation. It is a must for any educator."

Stan Martin

*District Technology Coordinator
Breckinridge County Schools*

Watch the May issue of *Kentucky Teacher* for teachers' favorite curriculum and instruction resources on the Internet.

What's your favorite Internet site for teachers or students? Please send your recommendations to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us. As long as your good ideas keep coming, we'll keep printing them!



Photo by Kentucky Historical Society

With the help of an event volunteer, basket weaver Scott Gilbert of Scottsville demonstrates split-oak basket making to two of the 8,000 students who took part in last year's Kentucky Folklife Festival.

Apply now to attend the Folklife Festival '99

The deadline is April 30 for teachers to register student groups for the Kentucky Folklife Festival. The event's "education days" will be Sept. 16 and 17 in downtown Frankfort.

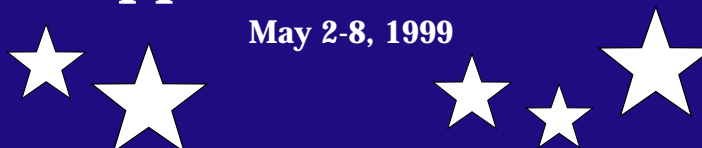
This third annual event, presented by the Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Arts Council, will give students opportunities to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Highway 23, otherwise known as Kentucky's Country Music Highway, and feel the excitement of urban traditions from Louisville and Lexington. Music, crafts, food and occupational traditions from all regions of the state will be presented, with a special focus on the similarities and differences of urban and rural traditions. Students will learn about Kentucky's diverse landscapes, regions and people.

Registration requests received before April 30 will be honored on a first-come first-served basis. Those who requested registration for the 1998 festival and were placed on the waiting list for the 1999 festival will be given first priority. To register or request details, contact LoisJoy Ward at (606) 277-4409 or LoisJoy.Ward@state.mail.ky.us.

*The Kentucky Department of Education
applauds Kentucky's teachers!*

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 2-8, 1999



Reading solves quandary of 'nothing to write about'

By Fran Salyers
Kentucky Department of Education

"Nothing ever happens in my life worth writing about."

Diane Bach, a 4th-grade teacher at Paducah Independent's Morgan Elementary School, often heard that protest from students when she asked them to write personal narratives — accounts of their own experiences.

She is hearing fewer of those protests these days. A reading project she

Diane Bach displays some of the books in the text set for her Oregon Trail study. She has found that students become more descriptive writers when they read and discuss books based on a common theme.

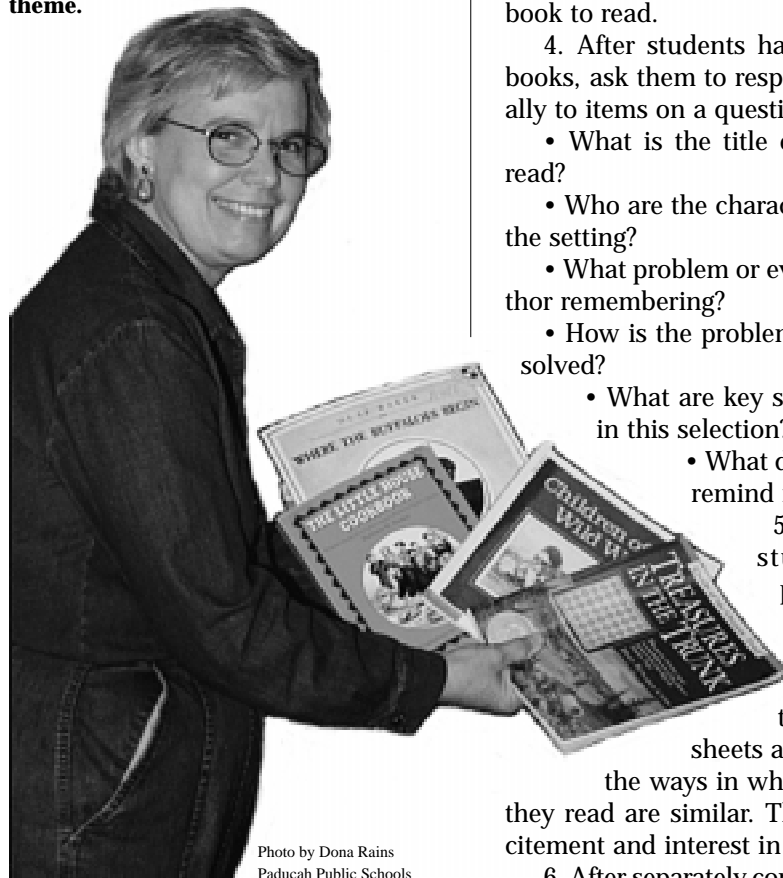


Photo by Dona Rains
Paducah Public Schools

developed is helping students generate writing ideas and produce narratives rich in content and detail.

Bach shares this step-by-step summary of her "Literature-Based Reading Across the Curriculum":

1. Over the course of about a week, read "The Remembering Box" by Eth Clifford to the class. At points of change in episode or perspective, stop to ask students, "What are you thinking?" Record their thoughts on a large piece of paper. At the end of the story, ask students to reflect on these thoughts. Their reflections demonstrate what the students comprehend and what arouses each one's curiosity.

2. Present a "text set" — a variety of books with the same general theme (in this case, common life experiences) — and allow time for students to browse.

3. Ask each student to choose one book to read.

4. After students have read their books, ask them to respond individually to items on a question sheet:

- What is the title of the book I read?
- Who are the characters? What is the setting?
- What problem or event is the author remembering?
- How is the problem or event resolved?

- What are key sensory words in this selection?
- What does this story remind me of?

5. Organize the students in pairs. The partners share answers from their question sheets and discuss all the ways in which the books they read are similar. This builds excitement and interest in other books.

6. After separately considering their

own responses to the "it reminds me of" question, the partners discuss their memories with each other. Students then draft their personal narratives. These drafts can be filed or taken through the writing process. Students can use their completed question sheets as they review their own drafts:

- What problem or event am I remembering?
- How is the problem or event resolved?
- What are some key sensory words in my writing?

7. When the writing is in final form, each student sits in the "author's chair" and shares the narrative with the entire class.

Bach uses students' responses on their question sheets to evaluate their understanding of the stories they read. She uses a holistic scoring guide to evaluate their writing.

Bach said this project, which she developed from ideas presented by University of Kentucky professor William Bintz, was a success in her classroom. She thinks it stimulated ideas and taught students to identify and use sensory words — words that communicate sight, sound, feel, smell and touch — to add imagery to their writing.

The project had other benefits, too. "The children were very enthusiastic and wanted to read the other books in the text set," Bach said. "All of them were reminded of events in their lives to write about — much different from the common response, 'I don't know anything to write about.'"

Details about this project will be available on the Internet at www.paducah.k12.ky.us starting in April. To contact Diane Bach, address mail to Emma Morgan Elementary School, 2200 S. 28th St., Paducah, KY 42003; phone (502) 444-5760, extension 5027; or send a fax to (502) 444-5763.

'Life Experiences' Text Set

Teacher Diane Bach built the following text set around the "life experiences" theme.

- "The Remembering Box" by Eth Clifford
- "The Relatives Came" by Cynthia Rylant
- "Knots on a Counting Rope" by Bill Martin and John Archambault
- "The Ghost-Eye Tree" by Bill Martin and John Archambault
- "Some Birthday" by Patricia Polacco
- "Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs" by Tomie de Paola
- "Chicken Sunday" by Patricia Polacco
- "The Night the Scary Beasties Popped Out of My Mind" by Daniel and David Kamish
- "Tacky the Penguin" by Helen Lester
- "My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother" by Patricia Polacco
- "Secret of the Peaceful Warrior" by Dan Millman
- "One April Morning" by Nancy Lamb and Children of Oklahoma City

Bach said text sets can be used to promote reading — and writing — in all subjects. For example, after her students read their science textbook's chapter on space, each browsed a space-related text set and chose a book on a specific topic, such as a particular planet or America's role in space exploration. Students then became the class "experts" on their chosen topics, sharing with each other what they had learned.

Breaking New Ground

Three years ago, four Kentucky schools were selected to receive funds to establish model sites for full implementation of gifted and talented education. The schools were Flemingsburg Elementary in Fleming County, College View Middle School in Daviess County, Cumberland Trace Elementary in Warren County and Perry County's Central High School. Each of the four received \$50,000 over two years to implement 704 KAR 3:285, the administrative regulation that commits the state to a comprehensive educational program for gifted and talented school-aged children. The first-year grant earmarked \$20,000 for professional development. By the end of the second year, each school was to have under way a program of services it will continue to finance and administer on its own for at least three more years.

In this issue are profiles from two of the four schools: on this page, Flemingsburg Elementary's emphasis on identifying, then serving, all students who would benefit from gifted/talented services; on Page 6, how Perry Central's inclusive attitude and energy give way to a popular program that students want to be a part of. Page 7 spotlights how Pendleton County, using local funding, added a summer enrichment program for gifted students as "frosting on the cake" to regularly provided services.



In Flemingsburg Elementary 'gifted' model, community resources become opportunities

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Imagine putting all of your dreams and wishes into one basket. It's just not the thing to do, you say. You'll wind up with nothing, you say. Tell that to Kathy Sorrell.

"When we applied for the grant as a gifted program model site, we did just that," said Sorrell, gifted specialist at Flemingsburg Elementary School (Fleming County). "Now we are making those dreams come true."

The efforts of the faculty and administration to involve and educate students, parents and the entire community are the heart of this program. Together, they developed a detailed identification process and opportunities for experience and exploration that have opened doors for students.

"We had both countywide and schoolwide professional development sessions," explained Sorrell, "and we had a parent night." The staff also had an opportunity to see a master teacher model the infusion of critical thinking into classroom teaching, followed by six hours of professional development on the topic.

Fifteen teachers formed a study group to "identify processes, procedures and initial services," said Principal Margaret Snedegar. The group met once a month after school.

"We did a needs assessment, got input from the rest of the faculty and made a list of feasible service options," said Brenda Plummer, special education teacher and study group participant. "From there, we developed a survey for parents and the community, asking them if they were willing to help out, what would interest them and when and how often they could participate."

That information has been compiled into a resource guidebook for teachers. "The guidebook is one of Flemingsburg Elementary's biggest pluses," said Laura Pehkonen, gifted and talented education consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education. "This project demonstrates how schools and communities sharing the responsibility for teaching children can provide wonderful opportunities for all children, including those who are gifted and talented."



Photo by Rick McComb

Fifth-grade teacher Melissa Arrasmith has no problem getting volunteers for parts in a school play. Students get excited about the new experiences available to them at Flemingsburg Elementary, one of four Kentucky model implementation sites for programs serving gifted and talented students.

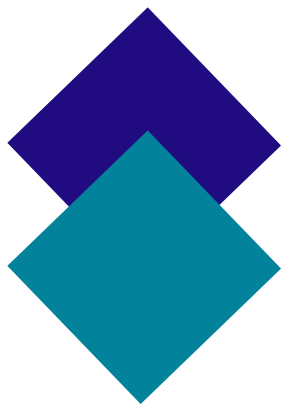
Identification is critical

Flemingsburg Elementary's faculty members based their own process of identifying gifted students on state regulations.

"The grant specifies that students

are to be identified in five different areas," explains Pehkonen. Those areas are general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creativity, leadership and visual and performing arts. "It is also emphasized that the group

(Continued on Page 7)



Perry Central 'gifted' model gives a lot, expects a lot, gets results



Sarah Mee emulates Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel at Perry County Central High's annual cultural fair. Art students provided a visual timeline of the history of art from Neolithic to modern times. Each student artist recreated a famous masterpiece.

Photo by Rick McComb

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Ask them to think. Ask them to create. Ask them to solve, to decide, to lead, to act.

This constant call to action keeps the students in Perry County Central High School's gifted/talented program interested, challenged and engaged.

"Perry County Central High has done a particularly good job matching services to different types of gifts," said Laura Pehkonen, gifted and talented education consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education. "Their honors curriculum is a powerful model, and the number and variety of advanced placement courses is outstanding."

Faculty and staff of Perry Central studied at the College of William and Mary's Center for Gifted and Talented Education and received a follow-up visit from the center's staff to complete program development.

"We learned that students need to face complex issues, themes and problems in areas of their interest and need," said district assessment coordinator Abbie Combs, "and that opportunities must be provided for cre-

ative production and the higher-order processes."

The curriculum provides multisensory approaches to instruction, motivational activities, self-management learning and self-esteem. Subject-specific honors classes, advanced placement and dual enrollment in selected areas are offered to all students.

Leadership training at Perry Central is an imperative.

- Selected sophomores and juniors attend a four-day, issues-based conference at the University of Kentucky.

- Up to 50 students attend a one-day youth leadership retreat at Buckhorn State Park. The retreat is conducted by students who attended the issues conference.

- A workshop taught by youth for youth concentrates on developing adult partnerships.

- Up to 20 outstanding student leaders will attend a three-day Steven Covey workshop, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," led by Abbie Combs.

- The school's Junior ROTC program is an integral part of leadership training.

In the academic areas, student participation in activities such as Math/

Science Day at Eastern Kentucky University, Physics Day at Kings Island and Sea Camp in the Florida Keys keep interest in the program high.

"We practice inclusion to the greatest extent possible," said James Combs, Perry Central's gifted coordinator. "Any student who expresses interest may participate in activities, whether they were previously identified as gifted and talented or not. However, there is no 'watering down' of the level of instruction or expectations. All students who participate must meet the same advanced-level criteria and expectations of achievement."

This approach has sparked significant growth in the number of participants. Approximately 20 percent of the school's population participates in the gifted and talented program.

"I feel like the opportunities for active learning that we are able to provide are really the heart of this program," said Combs. Examples of those activities include cultural and technology fairs, a mentorship program, the in-school Commodore Bank, arts and humanities workshops, field trips and participation in competitions and conferences.

Additional information on the

Perry County Central High School gifted/talented model implementation site is available from Abbie Combs in the district office at (606) 439-5814 or James Combs at the high school at (606) 439-5888. Both may also be reached by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at ACombs@perry.k12.ky.us or JCombs@perry.k12.ky.us.

Six additional model sites are now in the first year of designing and implementing services for gifted and talented students. They are Hinsdale Elementary in Kenton County, Verity Middle School in the Ashland Independent district, Sharpe Elementary in Marshall County, Mercer County High School, and the Monticello Independent and Owsley County districts. Kentucky educators are encouraged to visit model sites with demographics similar to those of their own districts or schools.

To request information on model sites or future opportunities for grant funding of gifted/talented programs, contact Laura Pehkonen at (502) 564-2672 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or lpehkone@kde.state.ky.us.



Pendleton County summer program offers a stretch for students

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Do you find it difficult to schedule enrichment activities for gifted/talented students during the regular school year?

So did the teachers in Pendleton County, and they did something about it. Since 1995, that something has taken the form of a three-week summer enrichment program. Each June, gifted/talented and high-achieving students entering grades 4-9 have opportunities to face challenges beyond those of the regular classroom. The program goes above and beyond multiple gifted education service options scheduled throughout the regular term.

"We received board funding for this gifted/talented enrichment program," said Pam Harper, the district's gifted coordinator, "and some scholarships were provided by the community."

Last summer, each student paid a \$60 fee for three weeks of classes that met from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Teachers nominated students who were in the gifted program or highly motivated academic achievers who had exhibited extraordinary talents, skills, creativity or leadership qualities.

Both teachers and students said

they enjoyed the program.

"It was great. You chose the area you wanted to teach, and you got to work with students who had chosen that area because they liked it, too," said Michele Lustenberg, Sharp Middle School art teacher. "They were challenged, and they challenged us to learn more."

Seventh-grade language arts teacher Selena Engnes, also of Sharp Middle, joined with Lustenberg for a class called artistic poetry. Cheryl York, reading teacher and Title I coordinator at Northern Elementary, chose to teach games.

"Games teach us a lot about problem solving and strategic thinking, and a lot of social learning takes place as well," York explained.

The classes put all of the student leaders into one group to work out problems. "These are strong individuals who are used to having other students go along with their ideas," said Harper. "Here, the group members are just as strong as they are. Everyone has to learn group dynamics to complete the projects."

Colleen Flynn, a primary teacher at Southern Elementary, concentrated on creative drama and Kentucky history sessions because "we have little opportunity to expose students to

these areas in the regular classroom."

A special education teacher at Northern Elementary devised a way to bring a new perspective to the areas of mathematics and geometry. Carrye Kearns taught students how to sew and make dolls and clothes.

Students were taken beyond their expectations in microbiology, ecology and earth science. "The teacher's responsibility is as the facilitator," said Pat Crowley, Sharp Middle 7th-grade science teacher. "We get the students started, then step back and let them handle the project."

Harper expects activities like the

summer camp to help as teachers begin to develop Individual Education Plans for gifted and talented students. "It is an excellent means of extending service options, not only in the academic areas but also in creativity, leadership, and visual and performing arts."

To request tips on setting up similar summer enrichment activities, send e-mail to Pam Harper through the KETS global listing or to pharper@pendleton.k12.ky.us, or phone Harper at (606) 654-6911.

Flemingsburg Elementary

(Continued from Page 5)

of identified students match the demographics of the community," Pehkonen continued, "and that the process identifies students who are often overlooked. That's a huge task."

The people at Flemingsburg Elementary are up to the task. According to Pehkonen, they have identified students in all categories including students from populations typically under-represented in gifted programs — especially underachieving and disadvantaged students and those with disabilities. The talent pools at Flemingsburg Elementary also reflect the demographics of the community.

Teachers compile jot-downs and checklists (tailored to the different categories), anecdotes and work samples in all areas of gifted identification. The Gifted Education Committee reviews data specific to each category of giftedness, including formal test scores as specified in the regulations to determine placement. Portfolios are used for assessments in the areas of creativity, leadership and the performing arts. Both parents and teachers may recommend students for consideration.

Services meet needs

Service options have significantly expanded at Flemingsburg Elementary. Students with gifts in specific academic and general intellectual areas are now receiving curriculum compacting, acceleration in content and differentiation in the regular classroom. Fifth- and 6th-graders who have the most qualifiers in the general intellectual and specific academic areas are served in a self-contained classroom.

For staff, the magnitude of services has exceeded dreams, according to Amy Bolar, music specialist. "We are opening doors we never knew existed."

For more information on this school's approach to meeting the needs of students identified as gifted, call gifted specialist Kathy Sorrell at Flemingsburg Elementary, (606) 845-9871, or send e-mail to Sorrell through the KETS global listing or at ksorrell@fleming.k12.ky.us. Another resource is Fleming County gifted coordinator Joy Gooding at (606) 845-5851 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at jgooding@fleming.k12.ky.us.



Photo By Sharon Crouch Farmer

Brandy Glaza (left) shows off her summer's work to her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Glaza, and cousin Gretchen. Glaza created a game designed to illustrate math concepts during the Pendleton County summer enrichment camp last year.

Teaching Teachers Technology



School technology coordinator Judy Kurtz offers some tips as Mason County Middle School student Danielle Weddle learns to use a digital camera.

Mason County teachers learn to use technology to improve instruction and empower students

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Computers have been a part of classrooms in Mason County since 1986. That means most students in the district can't remember a time without access to classroom technology — computers, CD-ROMs, digital scanners. Teachers regularly use computer networks for scheduling, recording attendance and grades, and communicating via e-mail.

However, when Mason County teachers and administrators met last spring to begin their consolidated planning, their focus wasn't on the quantity of equipment.

"We knew we had a lot of strengths in hardware," said Gary Booher, director of technology for the district. "We discovered that our weakest area was how we were integrating that technology in our curriculum."

After that revelation, administrators agreed to make professional development in technology a district priority, beginning immediately. Booher, school technology leaders and teams of teachers from every school in the county developed the district's Technology Integration Program. The program called for every teacher's professional growth plan to include a full day of professional development training in technology integration techniques. The training, taught by school technology coordinators and selected

teachers from each building, would kick off a year-long project during which each teacher would develop at least one project that uses technology to support established curriculum.

The initial eight hours of professional development leads teachers through the why and how of technology integration and offers good practices, Booher said. The program also relies on a video resource, "Technology in Today's Classrooms." Trainers and school technology coordinators like Judy K.P. Kurtz at Mason County Middle School have been available to work individually with teachers in developing their projects.

"It is an added plus for teachers that trainers are aware of the levels, needs and capabilities within their buildings," said Kurtz, who has taught at the middle school for 21 years, the last eight spent working with students and teachers in technology. "We can provide answers 'in time,' not days later. Professional development in the area of technology is a continuous 'must' to expand the horizon for our students."

To make many of the training materials easily available to all teachers, Booher posted the Technology Integration Program on a Web page, www.mason.k12.ky.us/nttis.htm, at the school's Internet site.

"It's exciting," Booher said, "because our district Web server is being used as an instructional tool. Some

teachers are posting their completed projects on the Web. Students can find resources for their assignments whether at school or at home. We are removing barriers and giving many people, parents included, access to what we're doing in our classrooms."

"We needed that something extra to draw in the most reluctant computer user to integrate curriculum with technology," Kurtz added. "Even though teachers were apprehensive at first, seeing this as just one more requirement, results have been fairly positive. Students and teachers together have certainly gained."

For the most part, Mason County teachers have become revitalized by the project. "With all the changes technology is making on society, we really believe that after 'reading, writing and 'rithmetic,' information technology and the ability to use it is the next most important skill our students need to know," Booher said.

That's why visitors to the program's Web site will see completed project information sheets for nearly every teacher in every content area. (Because of prior professional development scheduling, teachers at Charles Straub Elementary will post their projects later this academic year.)

This spring, teachers will evaluate the program and make plans for next year.

About the Projects

Many of the Mason County projects model collaboration across disciplines and offer opportunities for students to work collaboratively. Students are using technology to gather and record information, analyze information or present information to their classes. Here are two examples of how teachers are integrating technology in their curriculum:

- Middle school physical education students use spreadsheet and graphing software to record the heart rate for individuals and groups to better understand the effect exercise has on the heart.

- Elementary mathematics and social studies students research specific tourist locations and develop a brochure using desktop publishing software.

For more information about the Technology Integration Program, contact Booher at (606) 564-5563 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at gbooher@mason.k12.ky.us. Kurtz can be reached at (606) 564-6748 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at jkurtz@mason.k12.ky.us. For more information about the video resource "Technology in Today's Classroom," go to the Web site www.canter.net/cn/staffdev/tech_learn/ttc.html.

Quite a few teachers in Mason County have posted their projects on the Web. District Technology Director Gary Booher shares these sites:

Middle School

Language Arts/Reading/
Science — www.mason.k12.ky.us/mcms/explore/spaceweb.htm

Art — www.mason.k12.ky.us/mcms/others/MW/artpg.htm

Science — www.mason.k12.ky.us/proj/ms/payne.htm

High School

English/World Civilization — www.mason.k12.ky.us/proj/hs/medpro.htm

Music — www.mason.k12.ky.us/proj/hs/ch.htm

Algebra/Physical Science — www.mason.k12.ky.us/proj/hs/aq.htm

Core content review yields few surprises

By **Faun S. Fishback**
Kentucky Department of Education

Committees that met in late February found few surprises as they compared Kentucky's "Core Content for Assessment" to content standards drawn from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) framework and other national standards documents.

The comparison came at the recommendation of the panel of national testing experts advising Kentucky on creation of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). The review should help teachers target instruction more confidently, which should lead to improved student achievement on the Kentucky Core Content Tests.

The committees comprise teachers, parents, education association representatives, community representatives and university professors. Representatives of the Council of Chief State School Officers' benchmarking service, who help states with content issues, facilitated the comparison.

Five content areas — English/language arts, mathematics, science, practical living/vocational studies, and arts and humanities — were benchmarked in February. The committees' recommendations for further aligning Kentucky's core content to national standards were reviewed in March, and revisions were made where necessary. Comparison of core content for social studies will begin in May.

Participants in the reviews did not set out to make wholesale changes in the core content but were looking for ways to clarify Kentucky's standards.

"We are aware that many schools already have restructured their curriculum and aligned it to the core content," said Linda Sheffield, an education professor at Northern Kentucky University and member of the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council. The council also is advising the state board on development of CATS.

"We found different, more specific language — sometimes with NAEP, at other times with Kentucky's core content being more specific," said Helen Russell, a resource teacher in Barren County who reviewed middle-level language arts content.

Hickman County 6th-grade teacher Janice Gream said the elementary mathematics content review team found "strong to medium matches and areas where Kentucky has more in its core content than the national standards." Sheffield, who served on the same team, said, "We also found a few areas from NAEP that we do not think are necessary to include in Kentucky's core content such as 'finding real-number solution sets to linear inequalities' in 4th-grade."

Kentucky PTA President Karen Jones, who worked with middle school science, said she was "very pleased with what we found. I see Kentucky's core content is on target. We did find gaps, but this will help us strengthen the core content by fixing the gaps, which of course is what all parents want."

Jones said she thinks every parent and teacher should go through the content standards review process. "It sure opened my eyes," she said. "I also believe this shows everyone that Kentucky wants to improve and move forward with a powerful curriculum so that high student achievement is at its best."

Helen Sears, a retired teacher who now tutors and coaches academic teams in Daviess County, was a community representative on the middle school mathematics benchmarking team. "The whole process of teaching has changed so much since I retired in 1983," she said. "I'm tremendously impressed. There is more breadth and depth to mathematics now. Kentucky is very serious about giving students the strongest mathematics background possible."

You can have a voice in core content review

Whether you're interested in proposed refinements for a single content area or for the entire "Core Content for Assessment," the Kentucky Department of Education wants to hear from you.

Draft refinements in the English/language arts, mathematics, science, practical living/vocational studies, and arts and humanities sections will be posted on the department's Web site (www.kde.state.ky.us) in early April. The social studies section will be posted by late May. The site includes comment sheets for electronic feedback.

To invite broad participation in the public review process, the department has sent packets containing the drafts plus comment sheets to districts and schools, education leaders, parent groups, citizen and business organizations and others. The department has encouraged them to hold focus group discussions and has provided tools for planning and hosting such events.

Responses received by May 28 (June 11 for social studies) will guide the final review, scheduled for mid- to late June. Using the feedback received from individuals and groups, a team of teachers, administrators, parents, university representatives and business/community leaders will collaborate on the final refinements. This summer, the Department of Education will send the "Core Content for Assessment" to all schools. The Kentucky Core Content Tests for 2000 will be based on that document.

If you are interested in serving on the team that will do this important work, submit your name to Rhonda Sims, Division of Curriculum Development, at (502) 564-2106 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at rsims@kde.state.ky.us. Groups and organizations may submit nominations, too. The deadline for nominations is May 3 (April 12 for social studies).



Photo by Rick McComb

Marge Petit (standing), deputy commissioner of education for Vermont, talks with teachers Denise Bullock (left) and Janice Gream and Northern Kentucky University education professor Linda Sheffield about benchmarking Kentucky's core content with the highest education standards in the nation. Petit also works with the Council of Chief State School Officers, which helps states with academic content issues.

Out of the Box THINKING

They've got mail! 'Ms. O' brings parents online

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Getting important information to and from parents can be challenging, especially when your school has 750 students. Southern Elementary's principal, June Overton — "Ms. O" to students and parents — is a parent herself, so she has experienced both sides of that issue.

"As a busy parent with a demanding job, I have a personal need to communicate quickly and efficiently, and I knew the majority of our parents were in the same boat," Overton said. When e-mail communication became a reality this year, Overton realized she had the answer to that problem at her fingertips.

Southern Elementary staff members were already receiving a newsletter from Overton every day detailing the day's events and future activities. Parents received a monthly school newsletter via their children. Last fall, Overton began sending the daily staff newsletter electronically. As an experiment, she revised the daily issue and e-mailed it to a few parents whose addresses she knew. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

"We sent information home with students to inform parents of the opportunity to be connected to the school through e-mail," Overton explained. "We got about 50 responses from that one communication. The real flood came when people heard how great it was from other parents." Now more than 120 families with students in this Fayette County school receive the newsletter and communicate with Southern Elementary electronically.

"What I did not anticipate was the wonderful communication that flows

Mike and Connie Ricci, with daughter Chrisena, are among 120 Fayette County families who use e-mail to stay in touch with Southern Elementary. The Riccis say they communicate better with both the school and with their daughter using this new link.



Photo by Rick McComb

back," Overton said, citing examples of absence notes, questions about school-based decision making committee work and thank-you notes to faculty and staff.

The new communication channel is reaping benefits for teachers, parents and students. "Through this constant communication, parents and teachers begin to work on the same team. Parents are informed and teachers receive much-valued input," she said. Students reap benefits as their parents become active partners with the school.

Because all parents are not connected to the Internet, the electronic newsletter to parents simply enhances

other communications efforts, such as the printed monthly newsletter sent to students' homes.

"I believe our next step will be to get computers into the community for use by those without home access," Overton said. "The possibilities are endless."

E-mail and Learning

Southern Elementary uses e-mail to broaden students' horizons. In Jamie Loughry's 4th-grade classroom, students use a program called ePALS Classroom Exchange to communicate with students in Japan and throughout the U.S. The software uses a classroom profile to 'match' each group of users with others around the world. Loughry says that creating the profile is the hardest part of the process. "If you are too specific or too general, you may not be matched at all," she said.

The payoffs of this activity go beyond the technology, according to Loughry. "We've only been working with this program a short time but have already been able to tie it in with our writing and multicultural curriculum components," she said.

A classroom computer connects to a television, allowing the entire class to read replies and compose messages together. The program is designed for elementary-level students and can be downloaded from the Internet at www.epals.com.

For more information on Southern Elementary's uses of e-mail and technology, contact June Overton at jbover@fayette.k12.ky.us or through the KETS global listing. The phone number is (606) 381-3589.

What's your out-of-the-box idea?

You probably have a "crazy" idea for bringing innovation and excitement to teaching and learning. Why not follow up? Your idea just might work! When it does, share the news in *Kentucky Teacher*. Send information to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us or call Fran Salyers at (502) 564-3421.

Historical timeline spans gym — and learning styles

By Mary Lovell
Bourbon County Schools

Mary Lovell is the director of communications for Bourbon County Public Schools and a member of the Kentucky School Public Relations Association.

As the classes lined up in the hallway outside the gym at Cane Ridge Elementary School, you could hear the curiosity and excitement as the students prepared to enter the darkened room.

"This is going to be scary," one small child said as he peeked in at the



Heather Peters presents her concept of the Statue of Liberty.

frozen figures around the gym's perimeter. The students quietly entered this "interactive museum." Each time a student stepped upon a blue sheet of paper at the foot of a historical character, a flashlight suddenly spotlighted the character's face and, like a mechanized wax figure, the character came to life. The likes of John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, Dolly Madison, Louisa May Alcott and Eli Whitney spoke about their lives and times.

Forty-nine people from American history were represented in the timeline created by 4th-grade students of teachers Theresa Hammonds and Amy Baker. The students spent weeks researching, preparing costumes, and writing, memorizing and rehearsing their speeches.

"I liked being Betsy Ross," commented Sarah Holmes. "I like doing research and finding out about historical figures. I didn't know who she was before I started."

"I didn't like the assignment at first," confessed Josh Rison, who represented pioneer Simon Kenton. "I had to look this stuff up. ... But after I was done, I liked it because everybody would come to me and ask questions. I got a lot of attention with it."

John Rankin, in the role of Captain John Smith, said some girls in his class had told him his character had been shot in a gunpowder accident, "but I couldn't find it in any encyclopedia."

Heather Peters straightened out a few 5th-graders who quizzed her as the Statue of Liberty.

"They asked me where I was born," she complained. "I told them I wasn't born; I was built."

Kathryn McCarty thought learning through the timeline project was "much better than writing a report."



Photos by Mary Lovell, Bourbon County Schools

Cane Ridge Elementary students take notes as Betsy Ross describes her role in making one of America's earliest flags. Sarah Holmes portrayed Ross, one of 49 figures presented in a project designed to make history come alive for all students, no matter what their individual learning styles.

Different Ways to Learn

While some students said they enjoyed the research aspect of the assignment, others enjoyed performing more. That, said teacher Hammonds, was the foundation of the project's success.

"The research aspect allowed visual learners to use the Internet and library resources to learn," Hammonds said. "Kinesthetic learners were able to play parts, providing them some movement throughout this project. The auditory learners were really at an advantage. They could learn from everyone's speech."

Hammonds and Baker developed the project by adapting several "Different Ways of Knowing" modules they had read. Hammonds said the project was effective with all students, no matter what their individual learning styles or dominant intelligences, because each student could choose how to research and present a historical character.

Baker agreed. "By working on the timeline, every student gained a better understanding of people and events that shaped our country," she said.

Back to the Timeline

Meanwhile, at the far end of the gym, the light came up on Amanda Ballard, who began her rendition of Elvis Presley's "Ain't Nothin' But a Hound Dog" as she rubbed her tired

feet against her legs to ease the stress of standing through two one-hour sessions in the timeline.

Next to her stood Camryn Sponcil, who was excited to learn that his character, astronaut Neil Armstrong, was still alive. Further down the line, Alysa Lewis portrayed Oprah Winfrey.

"If I ever have my own show," she confided, "I would like to interview Sally Ride and Martha Layne Collins."

Former Governor Collins (enacted by Katie Robertson) was pleased with her role in the timeline project. "I just wanted to keep on going," Katie said.

To get more information on this project, contact teachers Theresa Hammonds and Amy Baker at Cane Ridge Elementary School by phone at (606) 987-2106 or by e-mail on the KETS global listing or at thammon@bourbon.k12.ky.us or abaker@bourbon.k12.ky.us. At press time, Stevenson Elementary School in the Russellville Independent district reported success with a similar project. For details, phone the principal, Cheryl Martin, at (502) 726-8425 or send e-mail to her via the KETS global listing or cmartin@rville.k12.ky.us.

Middle school finds that 'looping' raises students' comfort level — and learning

By Faun S. Fishback

Kentucky Department of Education

Over the past two years, the "comfort level" for 7th- and 8th-graders at Butler County Middle School has increased steadily. Principal Larry Watkins notices it. The teachers on the two 8th-grade teams notice it. Students notice it, and so do parents.

With the rising comfort level, students seem to be doing better socially and academically. The number of behavior referrals are down, Watkins said, and more students are successful because teachers are able to build on what they *know* students have learned.

What's happening at this southwestern Kentucky school to make students more comfortable in their classrooms and more successful in learning? It's a fairly new concept called looping. When grade levels are looped, teachers stay with the same group of students from one year to the next.

"In sports, you don't change the head coach every year," said Watkins, who is president-elect of the Kentucky Middle School Association, "yet we're doing that with children in middle school classrooms every year. Why would we *want* students to change teachers every year?"

Butler County Middle is one of only a handful of Kentucky middle-level schools that use looping. As the school's students enter the 6th grade, they are divided into two teams. When they enter 7th grade, a team of three or four teachers picks up each team of students and stays with those students through the 8th grade. When those students complete the 8th grade and leave for high school, their teachers rotate back to pick up another 7th-grade team.

Four years ago, Watkins began considering looping for the middle school. When portfolio assessment was moved to 7th grade in 1997, Watkins decided to move some 8th-grade teachers to 7th grade and begin looping.

Some teachers initially were uncer-



Photo by Rick McComb

Teacher Holly McKee leads Butler County Middle School 8th-graders in a discussion of events leading to the American Revolution. Through a system called "looping," McKee and the two other teachers on her team have taught the same students for two years.

tain about the change and were hesitant to try looping. Now in their second year of the concept, the 8th-grade teachers can find few negative things to say. LaNetta Clemmons, Dennis McCrocklin and Holly McKee are one 8th-grade teaching team; Kyllie Doughty, Sarah Ingram, Pam Fazel and Tom Stewart are the other team. Some of the teachers have secondary certification, some are P-8 certified, and others have middle school certification.

When they sat down recently to talk about looping, all agreed the biggest negative was that first year of teaching different content. "It's a little more work at the start," said McKee, who taught world history last year before rotating back to U.S. history. "It's tough, but it makes you grow as a teacher."

Even that perceived negative has become a positive two years into the program. "Now, I like getting to teach more things," said Doughty.

Early on, teachers were concerned about having a student for two years who just couldn't get along with other team members. That has been a near-nonexistent problem. During the two years, only two students have been "traded" to the other team — in both

cases with improvements in student behavior and academic success.

The Butler County Middle teachers said these advantages with looping outweigh the negatives:

- Because students are with the same teachers for two consecutive years, teachers learn students' strengths and weaknesses. "You don't lose time trying to figure them out," said Doughty. "You just continue helping them achieve."
- Teachers know what their stu-

dents have learned and can pick up where 7th grade left off. "They can't say, 'We didn't study that last year,'" McKee said. "I can use key words from last year's lessons to remind them that they *have* heard this before." Fazel agreed. "We didn't have to go through orientation, and we don't have a lot of reteaching," she said. "I believe we've gained two to three months of instruction because of looping."

- Students are making better grades and tackling more challenging work as 8th-graders than as 7th-graders. "Student grades are going up, and writing is better than I've ever seen it at the 8th grade," McKee said. "I'm convinced looping works to improve learning."

- Each teacher has some level of accountability. "There is more division of responsibility" for accountability, Stewart said, because 7th- and 8th-grade teachers move back and forth between grade levels every year.

- Discipline problems have decreased this year. "There is no 'trying out' period in 8th grade," said Fazel. Watkins and the assistant principal also are looping students for disciplinary purposes. They share responsibility for 6th-grade students. However,

(Continued on Page 13)

How do students feel about looping?

Opinions of 8th-graders at Butler County Middle School echo those of their teachers. Six students made these points about having the same teacher for two years:

- "It (middle school) is not as scary. You know what the teacher expects from you each year."
- "Teachers are honest with you. They know you better. They help you. I enjoy it."
- "I feel safe. I feel like I can talk with my teachers. My grades have improved a lot."
- "I was afraid I'd be bored. But I'm learning a lot more."
- "I didn't like it at first, but now I know my teachers and I know what they expect."
- "The teachers only review things. They don't repeat things we've studied in the past."



Photo by Rick McComb

All eyes and ears are focused on the character of legendary underground railroad conductor Harriet Tubman, portrayed by Kemba (anna m. johnson-webb). The presentation was at Westport Middle School, one of 30 sites in the U.S. to host the Follow the Freedom Trail Education Series.

Follow the Freedom Trail

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

First she caught their ears. Then she caught their eyes. And finally, she caught their attention. For students at Westport Middle School, she was Harriet Tubman.

Performing artist Kemba (anna m. johnson-webb, who spells her name in lower case) appeared in the guise of the legendary underground railroad conductor as part of the Follow the Freedom Trail Education Series. The Jefferson County school was one of 30 sites in the U.S. to host presentations from a series of themes combining the history of the underground railroad with academic curriculum areas (history/social studies, mathematics and science, performing arts/humanities, geography/civics/government). The program also featured presentations by storyteller and former gospel music television host Beautinia Robinson and the Rev. Terrell Person, a descendant of abolitionist and author William Still.

The Follow the Freedom Trail Series is sponsored by the International Network to Freedom Association. Se-

ries performances will be available for schools to purchase this fall.

Related Resources

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has developed a CD-ROM of the presentation's mathematics and science applications. This resource is free to all teachers.

The National Parks Service provides series-related professional development in the form of summer and continuing education programs and a Saturday academy. The agency's Internet site (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/underground) offers details, information about the underground railroad, plus a comprehensive list of resources on the topic.

To purchase Freedom Trail Series performances, order the free CD-ROM or inquire about professional development opportunities, contact Addie Richburg, executive director of the International Network to Freedom Association, at (703) 721-0107; or Karen Simms, director of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Equity, by phone at (502) 564-3678 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or ksimms@kde.state.ky.us.

Funds help teachers get 'exceptional' certifications

Teachers who want training and certification to teach exceptional children can apply for financial assistance through programs sponsored or recommended by the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Exceptional Children Services.

- Future and career educators seeking certification to teach children with visual disabilities can apply for grants from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. Grants are available for undergraduate and graduate studies. More information is available from the Office of Programs for Visual Disabilities, Peabody College, (615) 322-2249.

- Kentucky's Division of Exceptional Children Services supports teachers who are seeking visual-impairment endorsements through the University of Louisville. Information is available from the division (see below).

- Teachers who have provisional certification to teach exception children and want to take course work required for full certification can apply for tuition assistance through the

division's Traineeship Program (see below).

- Education students specializing in occupational therapy or physical therapy may receive their last year of tuition free. The division will provide tuition money for the last year in school if the student agrees to work in a public school system for at least one year after graduation. Several higher education institutions have modified their programs to better train their students in a nonmedical model with increased emphasis on serving children and youth. The scholarship program has enabled several rural school districts to receive occupational and physical therapy services where there were none before.

Information on Division of Exceptional Children Services programs is available from Mike Miller or Renee Scott, Kentucky Department of Education, 8th Floor, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-4970; mrmiller@kde.state.ky.us or rescott@kde.state.ky.us

'Looping'

(Continued from Page 12)

each works with a specific 7th/8th grade team.

- Teachers feel a greater bond among themselves. "There is a greater connectiveness among teachers," said McCrocklin. "We discuss content a lot." A common planning period enables the middle school teachers to meet every day not just by teams but by grade level. "We can help one another out," added Clemmons.

- Teachers feel a greater bond with their students. Advisor/advisee sessions go better for Fazel. "My class and I have just clicked. We've all felt

more comfortable discussing topics," she said. Ingram added, "During the two years, we've grown attached to the students. I may have to shed tears at this commencement!"

For more information about looping at Butler County Middle School, call (502) 526-5647 and ask for Principal Larry Watkins or any of the teachers quoted in this article. All can be reached by e-mail through the KETS global system or by first initial plus last name plus 75@butler.k12.ky.us (for example, lwatkins75@butler.k12.ky.us).



Photo by Rick McComb

GLOBAL LEARNING — Steven Hoagland locates the Caspian Sea on a globe at Southern Elementary in Fayette County. The study of geography — regions, climates and products, resources and relationships — can be woven into all parts of the curriculum in ways that are relevant to everyday life.

Grants available in ESS Innovation Program

Through a program called “Extended School Services (ESS) Innovation,” the Kentucky Department of Education provides opportunities for schools and districts to try out new ideas to improve after-school instruction and supportive services for academically at-risk students.

Schools and districts are invited to apply for competitive grants for programs to be implemented in 1999-2000. Applications can be accessed electronically by addressing a new e-mail to *SBDM Tip Back* (or from a non-network computer, *sbdmtb@kde.state.ky.us*). On the subject line, enter

ESS1999 (with no space prior to the number 1). There is no need to write a message. Information will arrive by return e-mail.

Priorities for the awarding of grants include such areas as innovative curriculum and instructional practices, coordinated programs supporting parent/family literacy, and accelerated schools. Results of the 1998-99 Innovative Projects will be published in fall 1999.

Applications for 1999-2000 grants are due April 23. For more information about this program, call Karen Whitehouse at (502) 564-3678.

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Teachers: *Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.



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Law Day forum invites students to comment

The American Bar Association's Division of Public Education invites students to participate in an “online conversation” about equity in high school sports. Three scenarios challenge notions and invite comments. Legal experts and sports celebrities will present their own views as well.

Comments are due by May 1. To participate, go to the “Online Conversation with Leaders in the Law” Web site at [www.abanet.org/publiced/](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/convo/home.html)

[lawday/convo/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/home.html). For other learning opportunities related to Law Day, go to www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/home.html. Another site, www.abanet.org/publiced, offers a variety of resources.

For details, contact Paula A. Nessel, Division for Public Education, American Bar Association, 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611-3314; fax (312) 988-5494; e-mail pnessel@staff.abanet.org.

Join the Arts Alliance

The Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education (KAAE) invites teachers to join as partners in the organization's mission to secure continuing, high-quality arts education opportunities for all Kentuckians. The alliance, an affiliate of the Kennedy Center's Alliance for Arts Education Network, has several plans focused on arts education, including workshops for teachers and an online information clearinghouse and service center. The alliance strives to strengthen arts education and awareness in schools and

communities.

Annual membership dues are \$10 for individuals and \$25 for organizations. To join, send name, address, school or organization, e-mail address, phone number and fax number, with a check for first-year dues, to Valerie Sikkenga, 1604 Eastbridge Court, Louisville, KY 40223. For more information about the alliance, contact KAAE Executive Director Karen Kallstrom, 703 Magnolia Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42103; karen.kallstrom@wku.edu; (502) 782-5384.

One-week writing workshop looks at content-area issues

The Bluegrass Writing Project has announced a one-week program, June 21-25 in Lexington, designed especially for content-area teachers at the middle and secondary levels. This workshop will be focused on issues content-area teachers face in the classroom:

- balancing time for writing with coverage of course content
- using writing to learn
- designing writing activities that support specific course learning.

Two classroom teachers, fellows of the Bluegrass Writing Project, will lead the workshop. Sessions will meet from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily at the Carnegie Center for Literacy and

Learning. Space is available for 20 teachers. Each teacher who completes the workshop will receive a \$300 stipend.

To apply, send a one-page letter expressing interest in the program and describing your teaching situation, along with the name, address and phone number of a fellow teacher, principal or other instructional supervisor who could serve as a reference.

Mail your application before the April 15 deadline to Jan Isenhour, The Bluegrass Writing Project, 251 W. Second St., Lexington, KY 40507. For details, phone (606) 254-4175.

THE Bulletin Board

By Lisa York Gross
Kentucky Department of Education



'Women in History' events scheduled for September

Two events in September will focus attention on the roles of women in history.

Conference:

The annual conference of the Kentucky Association of Teachers of History (KATH) will be Sept. 24 and 25 at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. "Repopulating History: Women and the Curriculum" is for teachers at all grade levels. Conference themes vary from current historical trends to recent teaching strategies. Featured speakers include Elsa Barkley Brown, a University of Maryland specialist on the history of African-American women, and author and Duke University professor Gerda Lerner, a founder of the discipline of women's history. Information about the conference, KATH and membership is available on the Internet at www.uky.edu/LCC/HIS/KATH.

CONTACT: Nijel Clayton, 18th Floor, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-2106; nclayton@kde.state.ky.us

Seminar:

The Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Commission on Women will sponsor a women's history seminar for middle and high school teachers from 2-4 p.m. on Sept. 24 at the Kentucky History Center. The seminar facilitator will be Gerda Lerner. Attendance is by application only and is limited to 16 teachers. Teachers of all disciplines are encouraged to apply to this free seminar. Applications are due April 30. Teachers selected to attend will be notified by May 20. Participants will receive a *Kentucky Women's History Tool Kit* of curriculum materials for use in their classrooms.

CONTACT: Betty Fugate, Kentucky Historical Society, PO Box 1792, Frankfort, KY 40602; (502) 564-0472; Betty.Fugate@mail.state.ky.us



Special education listserv now online

Kentucky special education teachers now have a resource online: the KYSPED listserv. The listserv is an e-mail forum for professional networking. It provides a way for special education teachers and others statewide to exchange ideas, offer suggestions, announce meetings and conferences, and seek answers to questions. Resources highlight general special education issues and give information for specific areas.

Educators may sign up by visiting www.uky.edu/Education/kylists.htm and following the procedures for joining the KYSPED listserv.

CONTACT: Owen McKinney, Cambridge Consultants, 212 North Hubbards Lane, Louisville, KY 40207; (502) 897-3175; owen50@juno.com



Calling all junior historians!

Looking for a way to make Kentucky history come alive in your classroom? Consider getting students involved in the Kentucky Junior Historical Society. This statewide organization encourages Kentucky students in grades 4-12 to become active participants in local and state historical activities. Benefits include free admission to state historic sites and a student magazine, *Kentucky Heritage*.

Students from all areas of the state showcase their work at the society's annual convention in Frankfort and compete in categories as diverse as art, research paper, photography and oral history. Membership dues are \$3 per student. Now is the time to get information on starting a KJHS club for the 1999-2000 school year.

CONTACT: Rebecca Hanly, (502) 564-0472; Rebecca.Hanly@mail.state.ky.us



Environmental Education Council grants support learning experiences

The Kentucky Environmental Education Council is offering \$500 grants to educators who want to develop environmental education experiences for students. For 1999, the grants are focused on water quality. Projects may include water monitoring, wetland development or stream clean-ups, and they must include instruction on water pollution that does not originate at one particular spot on a river or stream.

Grant recipients also will receive instruction in Project WET, a nonprofit water quality awareness and education program for P-12 educators and students. The grant application deadline is May 1.

CONTACT: Kentucky Environmental Education Council, 663 Teton Trail, Frankfort, KY 40601; (800) 882-5271

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

APRIL 1999

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Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to Kentucky Teacher, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.

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Printed with state funds by the Winchester Sun, Winchester, Ky.,
on recycled paper



Photo by Rick McComb

E-PALS — Miki Tanaka (left) and Ashley Frasher team up at Southern Elementary to communicate by e-mail. They and their Fayette County classmates correspond with students in classrooms throughout the world. Students also send e-mail to the principal to ask questions or comment on issues affecting the school. See Page 10 to learn about Southern's use of e-mail to keep in touch with parents.

"I am extremely proud of the Kentucky students, teachers, administrators, parents, school council and school board members, legislators, governors and citizens who have worked so hard for so long — and have encountered so much skepticism — to catapult Kentucky from mediocrity toward excellence."

Education Commissioner Wilmer S. Cody, on Kentucky's significant gains in reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For details, see Page 1.